



JULY 10, 2003

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DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY ELIMINATES TRAVEL TEAMS

The Georgia Department of Motor Vehicle Safety (DMVS) has announced that the driver's license Travel Teams, which visit 110 Georgia counties without permanent driver's license Customer Service Centers, will be discontinued effective August 1st. The decision comes as many State agencies are being forced to make tough decisions regarding eliminating programs or increasing costs for services due to Georgia's budget situation.

The 2004 budget funding levels have left the DMVS without funding for 243 permanent positions and forced to initiate a hiring freeze that has jeopardized the daily operations of many of the 56 permanent facilities around the state. The Travel Team license examiners are needed to provide staff for these permanent sites.

"We find ourselves faced with the choice of continuing to staff Travel Teams to support a small segment of the population or to begin closing permanent sites, which will serve the largest population," said Neal Childers, DMVS Commissioner. "As we return the Travel Team staff to our permanent sites, our customers will continue to receive the same reliable and consistent service that we have worked so hard to provide since our Agency's inception," he added.

Customers in the counties serviced by the Travel Teams will face a longer drive to reach a permanent Customer Service Center. But the DMVS would like to assure its customers that the extra effort will be worth it. By focusing all of our resources on the permanent facilities, the quality of service that they will find there will be much greater.

One major advantage of visiting a full service facility is the promise of getting a regular license renewal in 30 minutes, or you'll get the license for free. Since its implementation January 1st, DMVS has given away only 4 licenses statewide. The wait times for other services have also been drastically cut since establishing mandatory reservations for on-the-road testing and initiating Internet, mail-in and telephone driver's license renewals. At the full service facilities, customers can rely on a dependable five-day a week schedule (9:00am-5:00pm Tuesday through Saturday) and access to all driver's license services. The limited schedule for the Travel Teams was not always convenient for the local citizens. Many services were not available at the Travel Team sites, including motor vehicle reports, reinstatements, CDL and

motorcycle testing. Obtaining a road test at a temporary site was often impossible due to the limited staff and unpredictable customer demand.

The decision to eliminate the program was reached after a thorough review and evaluation of the Travel Team operation both internally and by two separate analyses from the Georgia Budgetary Responsibility Oversight Committee (BROC) and the North Highland Company, a management and technology-consulting firm. It has become more expensive and less efficient to operate the Travel Team program than to operate most of the permanent driver's license facilities.

Currently there are twelve Travel Teams made up of 24 license examiners that conduct regularly scheduled visits from one to three times a month. The Teams typically operate from county or city facilities that are oftentimes affected by their officemates' hours of operation. Travel Team examiners are required to spend many valuable hours in transit only to issue a minimal number of licenses each day -- time which would be better utilized serving customers at a permanent facility. They also must transport heavy and sensitive equipment to and from each location on a daily basis and set it up once they arrive.

For more information on driver's license services, contact a customer service representative at (678) 413-8500 or visit www.dmv.ga.gov.